



Website Creation As Easy As 1 – 2 – 3?

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Steps to Success

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Introduction

My first attempt at website creation came shortly after reading the eBook, "How to Create Your First Website by 3:45 This Afternoon." This eBook takes you step-by-step through the process of designing a simple website. I knew nothing about how to make a website, so I learned a lot very quickly. (If you'd like a free copy of this eBook, [**<CLICK HERE>**](#).)

Since that first web creation experiment, I have created blogs, websites using Weebly.com, WordPress sites, opt in sites, landing pages, sales pages, etc. Some of these techniques were easy to learn, and some I am still learning about. And just when you think you've mastered the web creation process, some new technique appears, and you go into learning mode again.

The purpose of this eBook is to provide useful information to anyone new to website design. I have pulled together research from all over the web hoping that it will shorten your website design learning curve. Website creation is a challenging, but rewarding, pursuit and I applaud your learning efforts.

Step 1 - Website Planning Questions

Before you can start working on your website, you **MUST** do some planning. The more you prepare the better your site will probably be. There are a number of questions you need to ask during this planning state of website development. Here are some of the most important ones:

What's the purpose of my website? Am I trying to sell a service or product? Do I plan on providing information to people? Am I concentrating on building an email list? And when people visit my website, do I want them to:

- Sign up to my newsletter
- Fill out a contact form
- Purchase something
- Download a PDF or e-book
- Become a member
- Leave a comment
- Read some important content

Who's my intended audience?

Understanding the type of people who visit your site is a very important task because you can use that information to enhance your site to suit them. As a result, you will gain more loyal visitors that come back again and again for more.

What is the age level and what kind of knowledge does your audience have? A layman might linger around a general site on gardening, but a professional botanist might turn his nose at the very same site. Similarly, a normal person will leave a site filled with astronomy abstracts but a well educated university graduate will find that site interesting.

What type of website will it be?

At the very least, there are four different types of websites we can create: authority site, sales page, squeeze page and a membership site.

Authority Site



When promoting you, your services, and your expertise, an authority site is key. This type of site can contain a blog, an “About Us”, description of your services and products, and of course a way for people to contact you!

Sales Page or Mini Site



These are highly targeted pages designed to sell a product, service, or event attendance. Get in the mindset of having a new site for each product you sell!

Squeeze Page



Want to make REAL money online? Then you need to build a contact list of your fans and followers! But you have to get their permission before you email them valuable information and offers. This is best done through a targeted opt-in page, (squeeze page)!

Membership site



Getting ten people to pay you \$1000 per month is difficult. But how about getting 1000 people to pay you \$10 per month? Much easier to do, and a paid membership site is the way to make it happen. You keep posting valuable info on the site, and people are charged each month for access!

What domain name will I choose?

When I register a domain name I need to consider a few important factors.

Firstly, what is the purpose of the domain? Is it's purpose corporate branding or is it to drive traffic to my website?

The domain name is a major factor when it comes to ranking on search engines. And search engines provide 90% of web site traffic.

Secondly, the domain must include the keyword for which you wish to rank high. Higher ranking means more traffic which in turn means more sales & profits.

So when it comes to purchasing your domain, make search engine ranking your number one priority.

What is my website budget?

Be prepared to spend some money if you want to have quality website online! Here are just a few of the costs involved with setting up and running a website:

- a good computer and monitor
- a reliable internet service provider (ISP)
- a domain name
- excellent web hosting
- an auto responder service

What type of web hosting will I use?

There are two types of web hosting providers, free and paid. Free providers provide you web space at no cost. However, they have the right to post their ads on your web page. Moreover, the web space obtained from free providers is just enough to host your personal home page and it also may not contain additional tools or support features.

On the other hand, paid web hosting providers give you a lot of additional options. Apart from hardware and software support, they provide tools for you for tasks like integration with payment gateways, installation of SSL certificates, auto responders and RSS feeds, etc.

The type of web hosting provider that you choose depends on the type of online business you want to set up. For instance, free web hosting may be sufficient to put your hobby into practice or set up a personal home page for yourself. It does not provide the liberty to run major applications. If it is your intention to do something on a professional basis, you would like to have your own web server for this purpose. In that case, go for a paid web hosting service.

As discussed earlier, free web hosting providers post ads of their liking on your websites, which acts as a distraction to your customers, diverting their attention from the main theme of the website. There are also a number of restrictions put up by these providers regarding web space usage. On the other hand, paid web hosting services offer more storage space with fewer restrictions at decent prices.

Will I be creating the site myself, or hiring a professional website designer?

A professional web design is essential to internet success. This is especially true for businesses. While there are many software programs, tutorials, and do-it-yourself websites available across the internet, nothing can compare to a professional web design, for so many different reasons.

There is a downside to professionally designed sites however, they are not cheap. You can expect to spend hundreds to thousands of dollars to get a good one. Most beginners are not able or willing to invest that kind of money into a venture when there is no guaranteed return.

If I create the site, will I use a template?

Designing a brand new web site or re-designing one that is beginning to look a bit jaded used to be a daunting task. The computer screen just sat there staring back at you and challenging you to be your creative best. With web design templates you no longer need to be intimidated at the thought of giving your website a new look.

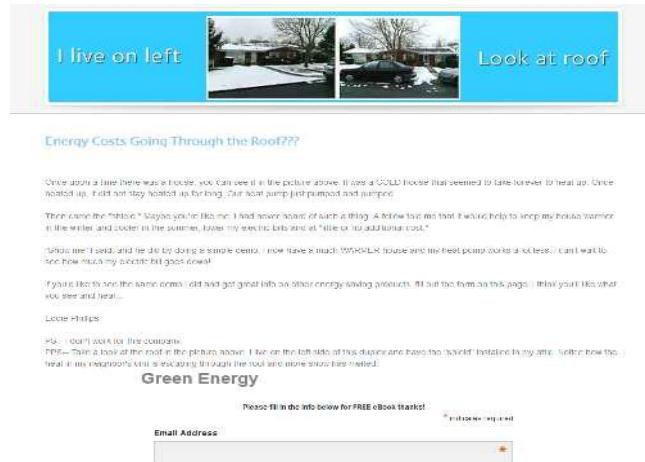
Web design templates help you jump start your creative process. If you do a search on the Internet you will find loads of sites that offer you galleries of free templates in every design theme imaginable. So take your pick and get a head start on your web designing attempt. These free templates are easy to preview and convenient to download.

Most free sites have a huge choice of flash templates, website templates and even PowerPoint templates for you to choose from. These ready-made, free web designs can be used as a foundation for your web site and are completely customizable, allowing you to still have creative control over your web site.

Depending on the content of your web site you can choose web design templates in a wide variety of themes including Architecture, Beauty & Fashion, Business, Cars, Entertainment, Interior & Exterior Design, Flowers & Gifts, Health & Fitness, Jewelry, Music or Travel & Vacation.

Let's move on from the website planning stage and begin looking at the first image a visitor sees after typing in our website address, (url). You probably already know the name of this page, but in case you don't, it's the **homepage**.

Step 2 - Home pages are WONDERFUL!



The all important page title...

Don't just use the page title to tell me who you are; tell me what you do too. If your company is called Bloggs Ltd don't only place the words, 'Bloggs Ltd' in the page title as there's plenty of room for more information. If Bloggs Ltd sells widgets, a good page title might be: 'Bloggs Ltd – Buy widgets online'.

Note in this example, 'Buy widgets online' was used to describe what Bloggs Ltd does, and not 'Widget seller'. When describing what it is you do be sure to speak the language of your users, and don't talk from your point of view. From your point of view you sell widgets, but from their point of view they want to buy widgets online, so do bear this in mind when authoring the page title.

The page title is the first thing that appears on screen, and especially on dial-up modems can be the only thing that displays for the first 10 seconds or so. For many web users this is the first piece of content they'll read on your site.

The page title is also very important for search engines, which place more importance on the page title than any other on-page element. Descriptive page titles are also essential for blind web users using screen readers, as it's the first thing that gets read aloud to them upon arriving at the page.

Grab the readers attention with a fantastic tag line

A good tag line is one of the most important usability features on any website. A good tag line should be explanatory and not vague, clear and informative and about four to eight words in length. A tag line is different to a company slogan, in that the former describes what the organization/website does whereas the latter is designed to evoke certain feeling or create a brand.

'Priceless' and 'I'm loving it' are slogans by Mastercard and McDonald's respectively – they differ from taglines because they don't describe what the organization does.

Tag lines are so important because no matter on what page site visitors enter your website, they'll always be able to quickly gain an understanding of what your organization and website offers. This can be especially true for site visitors coming into internal pages from search engines – by telling these site visitors what you do through the tag line, they may be more likely to explore your site beyond the initial page on which they enter.

Tag lines are also good for search engine optimization, as they appear on every page right at the top of the page, an area on to which search engines place importance.

Make a meaningful main heading

The main heading on the homepage is one of the first pieces of text web users notice, especially on clean well laid out websites. Sticking a 'Welcome to our website' may seem to be friendly and welcoming to you, but to task-driven site visitors it doesn't help in any way shape or form. A quick summary of what you do and/or what the website offers, in just four or five words can be highly effective (and very search engine friendly too!).

The opening paragraph

Perhaps the most important place on the homepage to tell your site visitors what you do, the opening paragraph must be short, succinct and straight-to-the-point. Just one sentence is enough to put across this most basic yet fundamental of information.

When writing this opening paragraph, remember to front-load the content (this rule actually applies to every paragraph on the website). Front-loading means putting the conclusion first, followed by the when, what, where and how.

Don't write a story with a start, middle and conclusion – generally speaking on the web, we scan looking for the information that we're after so put the conclusion first. This way, site visitors can read the conclusion first, which in this case is what your organization actually does. If they want to know any more, they can then continue reading or jump to another section of the page. (To see front-loading in action, read any newspaper article.)

Exceptions

So, does every website need to tell users what the organization does in these four different places? Well, not necessarily. We all know what Mastercard and McDonalds do, so it could definitely be argued that websites for household names need not explicitly say what they do. What these sites should do instead is tell us what the website offers, and this message can (and should) be put across in any of the above four ways – how else will site visitors quickly be able to find this out?

We've covered most of the content found on most home pages, but what about pictures and images. How many should we have and where do we get them, etc.?

Step 3 - A Picture is Worth a 1000 Words...



(These are two free sources of images use can use on your website. Click on the image to go to the site.)

Images are a fantastic addition to a webpage, but be conservative when you use them. Too many images can make your web pages hard to read and they may prove distracting as well. Images make your site load very slowly and more often than not they are not necessary. If you think any image is essential on your site, make sure you optimize them using image editing programs so that they have a minimum file size. There are a couple of image formats used on web pages, GIF and JPEG.

GIF stands for Graphic Interchange Format. For different types of images, this format is better with only some different colors like drawing, black and white images and little content that will be little pixels high. It is also supporting transparency. JPEG stands for Joint Photographic Experts Group. It supports 16 million colors which are the best suited for photographs and complex graphics. It does not work well on line drawings, lettering or simple graphics.

WARNING – overuse of graphics, pictures, and sound on your site can affect “loading time.” **Loading time is probably the most crucial aspect of web design.** Just because you have a great looking web site does not mean others will see it if it takes a long time to load. The design you choose should be optimized for the web, and should generally take no more than 15 seconds to load. If the load time is longer than this, people are likely to click on another site instead. While pictures, graphics, and sound can definitely make it appealing, they can take a while to load, so you don't want to have too many on the front end. The same goes for each individual page on your web site. If a particular page takes too long to load, the person perusing your site may decide to go elsewhere for the information.

Step 4 - What Pages to Include on Your Website

Besides the home page, there are three other important pages that should be included on almost every website. They are the “About Us” page, the “Contact Us” page, and a “Privacy Policy” page.

Getting to know you -- Your "About Us" page

The “About Us” page is the place to toot your own horn, but do it with facts not hype. That is, talk about the experience you bring to the table. Tell how many years you’ve been in business. Give your company’s story, the reason why it was founded. Describe your capabilities and explain why you’re uniquely qualified to offer the service or product you sell.

A visitor to your website wants to know there's a real human behind this online business. It's okay to be conversational in your copywriting. Be friendly. Be likable. Speak with passion about your company's mission. And let your personality shine through. You can still appear professional while being friendly and even funny.

Include your photo and also pictures of your employees if appropriate. These don't have to be studio portraits. They can be pictures taken in your work environment. A picture will make you seem more real and will help the visitor begin to feel he knows you. From there, it's just a small leap for him to trust you and want to do business with you.

Get feedback from visitors using a "Contact Us" page

A "Contact Us" page is also advisable to start a relationship among you and your clients. You must give your email address so visitor can contact you directly and you can give support completely. About us web page must be included to provide the information about your company. The home page must be included with links to all the other WebPages. All web pages must be given and the link to Home page.

It's a secret -- Your "Privacy Policy" page

A privacy policy is a must for every website or online business. In general, the statement is several paragraphs long explaining to the site users and customers exactly how their information will be used. It also details what information is tracked and how it is tabulated. But besides being important, they are also required by law if you collect personal data from your users. At this time there are no legal requirements on where to place your privacy page.

Step 5 - What NOT to Include on Your Website

In the previous chapter we talked about things to include on your website. Now I'll list several things that should not be on our site. These items are, music, unusual font sizes, pop ups, flash and bad grammar.

Background music

Unless you are running a site which promotes a band, a CD or anything related to music, I would really advise you to stay away from putting looping background music onto your site.

Extra large or small text size

You should design the text on your site to be legible and reasonably sized to enable your visitors to read it without straining their eyes. No matter how good the content of your website or your sales copy is, if it's illegible you won't be selling anything!

Pop up windows

Pop up windows are so blatantly used to display advertisements that in my mind, 90% of pop up windows are not worth my attention

Flash

Flash is widely used to create advertisement banners and animations during website design. Flash banners can serve their desired purpose only if they are used efficiently and sparingly. As these flash banners may add believability to particular web design, but they have many disadvantages as well. Flash banners can be easily downloaded only if you are connected to high speed connection. When web designer uses too many frames to describe a simple animation then it doesn't enhances the purpose of website rather it hinders it.

Use a spell checker

Bad spelling is unprofessional and should not appear on your website! If you want someone to do business with you or take your advice, you MUST use good grammar and spelling.

Step 6 - A Couple of Things to Think About...

Your website is now pretty much completed and you're ready to show it off to the world wide web. But first,

Can people and search engines navigate your site easily?

Clear navigation is another important aspect of good and effective web design. If your site is easy to get around, users are less likely to become confused. If information is too difficult to locate, they will more than likely go elsewhere to find it. Be sure the links and information are placed so that they make sense to those visiting your site. If there is a logical order, be sure to follow it.

The navigation menu should be uncluttered and concise so that visitors know how to navigate around your website without confusion.

Does your new website “play well with others?”

Web browser compatibility is also a very important aspect of good web design. When creating your site, don't stop when it looks good and works well with one browser. Make sure it works with commonly used browsers such as Internet Explorer, Mozilla and Netscape. This is important because what is compatible with one browser may not be with another. Since the object is to draw as many people as you possibly can to your site, making sure they are able to access it is important.

How do I get people to come visit my site?

Take advantage of online forums and online communities. The great thing about forums and online communities is that you can target a certain group that fits the certain demographic that you are looking for. You can discuss about lots of things about the niche that you represent or offer. Another great advantage is that you know what you are getting into and you will be prepared.

You can also use newsletters. Provide people with a catalog of your products as well as interesting and entertaining articles. If you make your newsletter interesting and entertaining, more people will sign up for your newsletter and recommend it to others. The more people who sign up for your newsletter, the more people there will be that will go to your site increasing your traffic.

Write articles that capture the attention of people that have interest in your product. Write articles that will provide tips and guides to other people interested in your product or service. Writing articles that provide good information others can provide a steady stream of traffic to your website.

Many sites offer free submission and posting of your articles. When people find interest in your articles they have a good chance of following the track by finding out where the article originated. Include a link or a brief description of your company with the article and there's a good probability that they will go to your site.

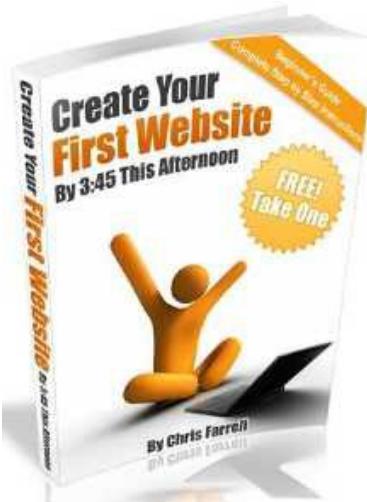


Step 7- Final Thoughts

Website creation and design boils down to four steps:

1. Planning your website (very, very important)!
2. The actual creation of your website – roll up your sleeves and start sweating.
3. Telling the world about your site and getting people to come visit.
4. Maintaining your site – you must keep your site current and up-to-date with fresh content and updates.

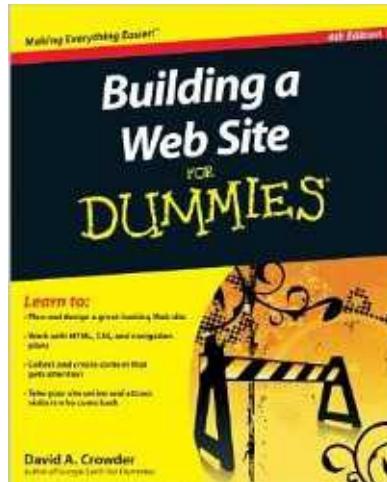
This eBook has addressed steps one and three in some detail, although step three may be the subject of my next eBook. Step four just makes common sense, the world is constantly changing and so must your website. I have not dug into step two much at all because this would require another whole eBook. I would like to recommend two good resources I have read and used in terms of website creation:



This is the first book I read about website creation. It's FREE and has 125 pages covering things like:

- Do I need my Own Website?
- How To Start Creating
- Downloading and Installing
- Domain Name Servers
- Creating Your First Web page
- Saving Files Correctly
- Publishing Your First Web Page

The list goes on, but you get the idea I think. Just click on the picture to download this valuable resource.



This is NOT a free resource, but you can get it at a great discount by clicking the image above. This book has over 350 pages and covers website building from A to Z, and then some.

Step 8 - Website Resources

During the last couple of years, I've come across a number of useful sites and programs to use with web creation. Here's a list:

Domains and hosting – [Go Daddy](#)

Auto responders – [AWeber](#) (paid) and [MailChimp](#) (free)

Great HTML (the language of websites) training at [o2GEEK](#) – “If you are new to HTML this HTML Training for Beginners course is perfect for you. Join and learn with my mom. We will not rush you through anything. If my mom gets it we move on if not we dig deeper into it until she does. You got a question just pick up your hand and we will be right there as that's what we do at o2GEEK.”

Free web authoring software – [Nvu](#)

Free FTP (file transfer protocol) – [FileZilla](#)

Free images and photographs – [FreeDigitalPhotos](#) [Stock.Xchng](#) [Morgue File](#)

Free image resizing software – [IRFANVIEW](#) (for faster page loads)

Free privacy policy creation – [FreePrivacyPolicy.com](#)

Free website (hosting and website creation instructions included) – [Weebly](#)

Free blogging website and hosting – [Blogger](#)

PS – Final Thoughts About How to Create Trust Among Your Web Site Visitors



It's essential that your web site create an atmosphere of trust. If your visitors feel you're trying to deceive or trick them, then you've wasted your time. Have you ever considered ways to create an atmosphere of trust for your web site? Don't stress, it's easy to develop trust among your online visitors.

You probably know that, "you don't get a second chance to make a good first impression." Creating trust for your internet site visitors isn't accomplished just by a single action. Trust comes about by the small things you do all over your web site. When viewed as a whole, your web site gives visitors a feeling of stability, integrity and legitimacy for the business and services you supply.

The bad or good news is, few site owners concentrate on developing trust in the minds of their website visitors. Thus, if you develop trust successfully, it's a real and lasting competitive advantage to your business.

Listed below are a number of easy steps you can take to start.

1. Your site style and design is one of the first things visitors will notice. Be sure it is professional and related to the information you are presenting.
2. Make your site navigation "user-friendly." If guests can't find what they're searching for easily, they'll question your skill in delivering what they need.
3. Make the web site unique by giving it its very own tone and style. People buy from people, not machine generated clones.
4. Adhere to the HEART principle of making online content. (Note: HEART represents Honest, Exclusive, Accurate, Relevant and Timely.)
5. Use terminology that's suitable for your visitors, thus building empathy.

6. Frequently add new material to your web page. This demonstrates the business is full of life and growing.
7. Test your links. Concerns will form in your visitors' minds if hyperlinks don't work or, even worse, bring them to error pages.
8. Great grammar and spelling are essential to web site content. When visitors see web site errors, they may wonder if this is a common company practice.
9. Don't make unreasonable and fantastic statements, like "Read this blog and you'll be a millionaire in just a few days." People don't like scams, get-rich-quick techniques and rip-offs.
10. Publish ACTUAL testimonials from others and third-party recommendations. Make an effort to use real names and connect to web sites wherever possible. Some web sites display images of letters sent by satisfied customers.
11. Provide case studies about clients you've helped, who actually use your product or service.
12. Don't put down or insult your competition. It's not professional. It is best to give an honest evaluation of competitive products or services.
13. Concentrate on developing your long-term reputation, and not on generating easy sales.
14. Create articles or blog posts for people, not search engines.
15. Make your "About Us" page personal and thorough. This page plays an essential part in making visitors feel that real people are behind the website.
16. Publish your picture or the pictures of the main people associated with your website. This reinforces the fact that there are genuine people behind the web pages.
17. Clearly show who's behind your website. Nothing creates more mistrust than a web site that attempts to hide its authors.
18. On the "Contact Us" web page, include an e-mail form, phone number, fax and address of your business. In European countries, it's a legal requirement for web sites taking money, but even web sites funded by ads will benefit from openness.
19. Supply a phone number that people can call and speak to a person.
20. Give an e-mail address connected to the web site domain, not addresses from free internet mail providers like Hotmail and Gmail.
21. Consider reciprocal links to other web sites very carefully. If your internet site is about natural food items and you've got hyperlinks to Party Poker, people are likely to question your reliability.

22. Think carefully about the advertisements you show on your web site. Make sure they're related to your subject and market.
23. Write and post your online privacy policy. Be very clear about what you will and will not do with personal information you get. State that you follow all data protection regulations. Make it easy-to-read and don't use legal double-talk.
24. Create and post a security policy. State what steps you take to make sure all purchases are safe and how you manage customers information.
25. Make sure that there is a security and privacy policy link on the bottom of every page. Make the link stand out on all order pages.
26. Definitely post your guarantee. I recommend making it a 100% money-back guarantee when possible.
27. Plainly state your refund and returns terms and conditions.
28. If you are using PayPal, place the PayPal emblem on your web site. For those who use services account with a big bank like Citibank or HSBC, place its logo on your web site.
29. Use Google search on your web site for two main reasons. First, it's a terrific search solution that helps your visitors find what they're searching for. Second, having the Google brand on your web site instills trust.
30. Should there be well-known business organizations for your topic, sign up and place their logos on your web site.
31. Use a discussion board on your web site and reply promptly to questions. Develop the mindset that you're thrilled to aid others without getting an immediate reward. As the old saying goes, "Those who give get."
32. Let people comment on your content. Interaction as well as an exchange of viewpoints build community and a feeling of engagement.
33. When people offer helpful criticism or remarks in the forum, don't remove them, but reply with your viewpoint.
34. Makes use of the phrase "secure website" if you attempt to get any information from guests, including publication sign-ups, forum feedback and payments.
35. On each web page, state, "We take your security and privacy seriously." Hyperlink the statement to the security and privacy policy.
36. If you sell a regular membership, give an inexpensive, entry-level alternative. You could offer a seven-day trial, or a monthly trial with a money back guarantee.

37. Only request information from customers that you need. For instance, with an e-mail newsletter sign-up, the only real information you actually need is an e-mail address.
38. When you've got pricing on your web site, make it easy to understand. I recently started to buy a publication that advertised for \$10. After I checked out, they added tax, postage and handling, making the final bill \$19.50. I didn't buy it as I felt they'd intentionally tried to deceive me.
39. Begin a modest newsletter about your company and services, circulating it among your customers and employees. Also, post it on your web site regularly.
40. Permit people to "unsubscribe" from your subscriber list. This might seem obvious, but I've discovered that many web sites still don't follow this procedure.

To make sure that you are always improving your credibility, any time you visit a web site, ask yourself if you trust it or not. Then think about why you've formed that opinion. Then put yourself in the shoes of a visitor to your web site, and do the same thing.